

Committee(s): Inner North East London Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Dated: 15/10/2025
Subject: Improving GP access in North East London	Public
Report of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A case study from Addison Road Medical Practice (ARMP) - Dr Janakan Crofton – GP Clinical Lead Waltham Forest - GP/ Medical Director ARMP Sindhu Balakrishnan – Chief Operating Officer ARMP 	For Information
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North East London

Improving GP access in North East London

A case study from Addison Road Medical Practice (ARMP)

Dr Janakan Crofton – GP Clinical Lead Waltham Forest - GP/ Medical Director ARMP
Sindhu Balakrishnan – Chief Operating Officer ARMP

Improving access to primary care in North East London

- Over the past two and a half years, a programme of work has been undertaken across North East London to improve access to primary care and the patient experience
- This is part of a national drive to move away from the 8am phone call queue and 'first come, first served' process for allocating appointments to a system where patients' needs are assessed and triaged, allowing practices to provide patients with the most appropriate care or other response, and ensure they are informed on the day they contact the practice how their request will be dealt with
- We are already seeing NEL-wide impact and recent national GP Patient survey results show that the experience and ease of contacting a GP practice in North East London have both improved by 2% over the past year.
- ARMP are presenting their journey, as an example of a practice that has transformed access to primary care.

ARMP – Who we are



Background:

At scale GP provider based in North East London pushing the boundaries of what accessible, equitable and patient centred care looks like.

Mission:

“Changing lives, creating equity, leading with compassion.”

ARMP – GP access overview (2025)

- **7 GP practices across North East London (NEL)**
 - Large purpose-built health centres
 - Small Victorian terraces in areas of deprivation and high need
- **Serving 75,000 NEL residents**
 - Four Primary Care Networks (PCNs)
 - Waltham Forest and Havering

Key Success Ingredients

- 'Digital Hubs and Call Centres' - Multi-professional co-located spaces
- Cloud Based Telephony (CBT) and GP led AI powered triage
- 100% digitised access through single point of access virtual front door
- Data-led
- Continuous improvement culture embracing modern general practice access
- Outreach access models
- Continuity of care
- Equitable access

Challenges (2017)

Demand

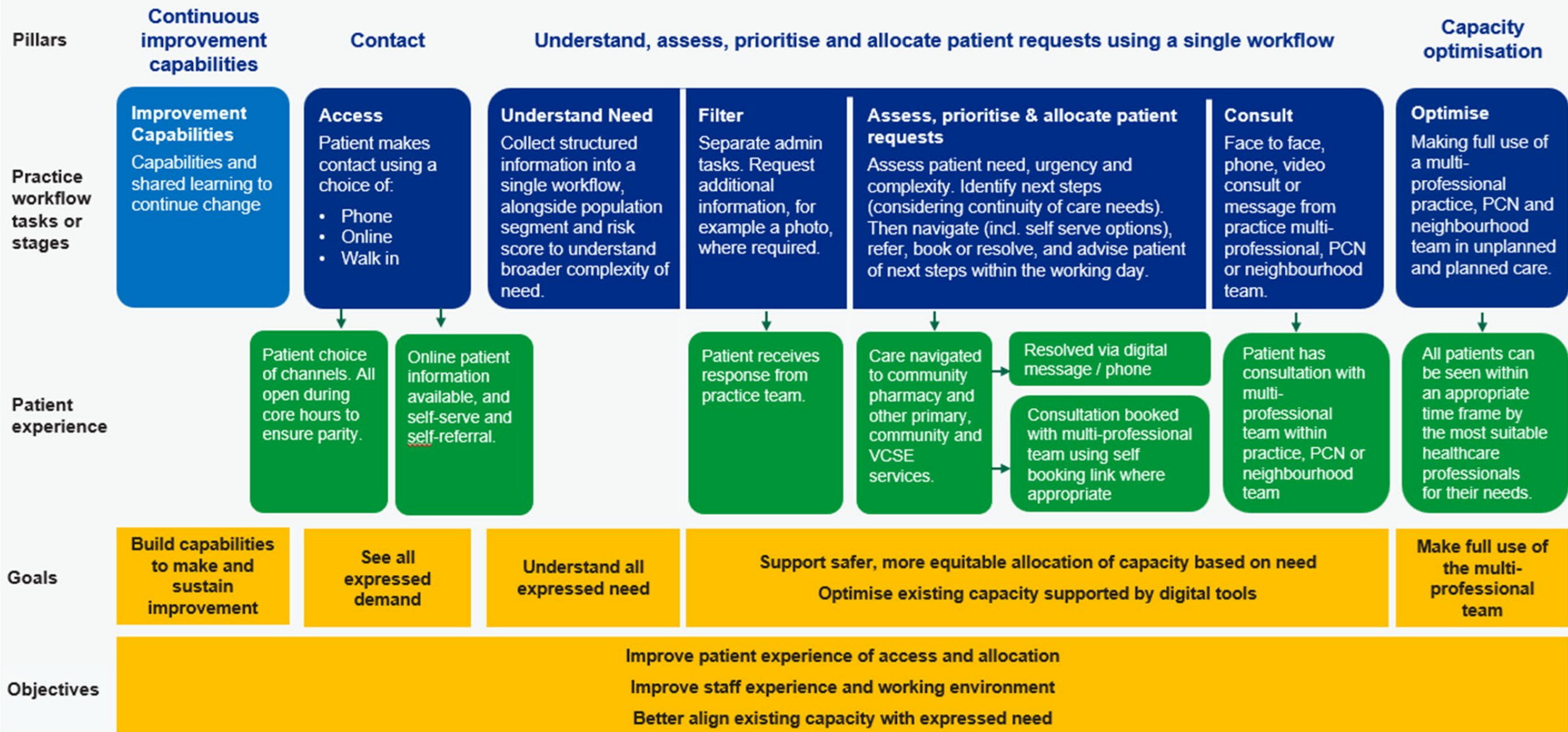
- Rising demand and complexity - unmet demand
- 8am rush
- Increase in in-hours 111 use and rising A&E attendance
- Queues snaking around the corner of the building
- Long call wait times (>30 minutes) and long waits for routine appointments
- Rising patient dissatisfaction
- Widening health inequalities and digital exclusion

Supply

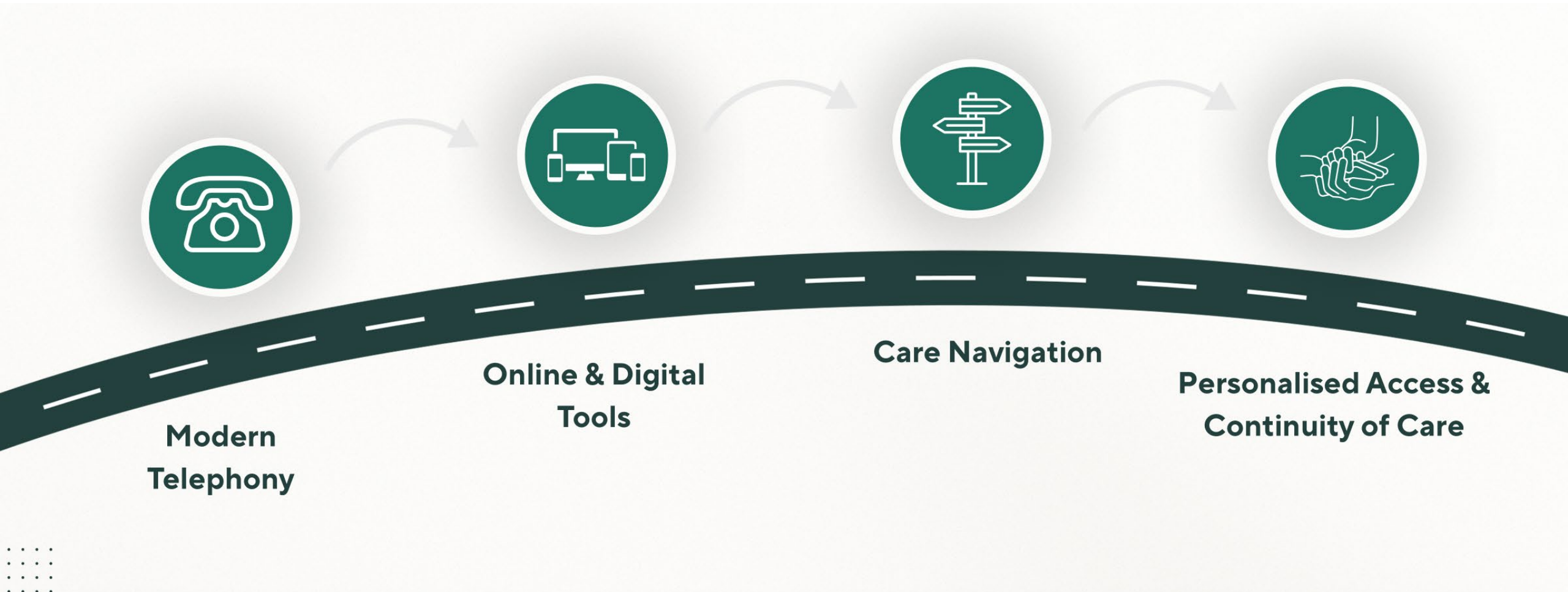
- Not enough GPs
- Suboptimal workforce skills mix
- Lack of physical space and unfit premises
- Tired and burnt-out workforce
- Dwindling continuity of care



The model of modern general practice



Our journey to better access



Continuous improvement capabilities

Bring in quality improvement and change management expertise



Build capabilities to sustain change

Share learning.. it's a journey

Plan, Do, Study, Act



Contact – patient choice of channels

Phone, online or walk-in

- All open during core hours (08:00 - 18:30)
- Safe Surgeries, Veteran Friendly, Pride in Practice, Cultural awareness
- Language translation, interpreters, advocates, braille and hearing loops

Modern Cloud Based Telephony (CBT)

- New system with live real time data dashboards on large screens
- Call back features and queue management functionality
- Reduced waiting times at predictable peak hours
- Robust management and oversight

Online consultations and self-referral options

- Initially 24/7 online requests
- Digital champions to support digital exclusion and data provision
- Laptops at receptions
- Self referral: Talking therapies, Minor Ailments, Eye Conditions, Dental, Family Hubs, Musculoskeletal support



Understand need

Structured forms and AI powered triage

- Patient co-production; E-consult to Klinik
- Open for new urgent problems 07:30 - 16:30 and until 18:30 for non-urgent routine queries

Digital Hubs & Call Centre

- Multi-professional ergonomically designed co-located spaces
- Learning environments
- Data led with close eye on productivity
- Informed recruitment / skills mix

Personalised support

- Population segmentation & Risk Scoring
- Support for digitally excluded and for those with language barriers
- Equity - consistent approach through “single point of access virtual front door”
- “100% Digitised Access”
- Allocation of longer appointments; named / preferred clinician



Filter – administrative efficiency

Separate admin from clinical demand

- Reception teams trained as “Care Navigators”
- Supporting access to self referral pathways
- Any uncertainty refer through virtual front door
- Large volume of incoming traffic is admin related - kept away from clinicians

Streamlined processes

- Photos / documents / forms / chased by GP assistants
- Medication queries - straight to pharmacists
- Referral queries - straight to secretaries
- Multi-professional co-located spaces supports agile comms

Frees up clinician time

- 25-30% overall demand - managed via the Digital Hub
- GPs operating at the top of their license
- Seeing complexity and supporting relational continuity of care
- Supporting wider multi-professional teams as expert generalist



Assess, prioritise and allocate



‘GP-Led Total Triage’ supported by trained Care Navigators and GP Assistants

- Seeing the right person, in the right time frame at the first point of contact

Utilising in-hours appointments, out of hours appointments and the capacity beyond the walls

- Utilising General Practice capacity until 8pm and weekends
- Pharmacy First, VCSE, Winter Hubs, MECS, IAPT, Family Hubs

Balance same day demand vs continuity of care

- Longer planned care appointments for long term conditions, frailty, palliative care, vulnerable patients, complexity, SMI.
- Plug into MDTs; Group Consultations; Peer Support Groups
- Face to face prioritised
- Support for advocates and interpreter service requirements
- Named GP / GP MicroTeams for patients that would benefit from continuity of care. Named / preferred clinician supported where possible

Optimised capacity



PCN & Neighbourhood Teams

- Extended Access
- Same Day Access
- MDTs +++
- SPLW, H&W Coaches, Physios, Dieticians, Pharmacists, AHPs



Right clinician, right time

- Each practice needs its unique blend of skills mix to meet its patient demographic needs



Align planned care vs unplanned care capacity

- Medication reviews
- Long term condition reviews
- Smears, immunisations
- Screening
- Proactive Care

Modern General Practice - GOALS

1. Surface all demand; reduce unmet demand and demand failure
2. Safer and more equitable allocation of capacity to meet demand
3. Understand need; data driven triage
4. Optimised workforce capacity and full use of multi-professional team

Outcomes

MGP, Digital Hubs and Call Centres

- **100% response** to online consults within **three hours**
- **Call wait times** less than **1 minute 30 seconds** down from 20 minutes +
- **Missed calls down from 33% to 9%**
- **92% staff satisfaction scores**
- CQC **Outstanding** in Well Led domains
- Lowest utilisation of in-hours 111 use in the borough
- **High patient satisfaction scores** across Google and National GP Patient Survey (GPPS)
- Forest Surgery **29% increase in GPPS 2024 vs 2025. Highest increase across NEL**
- **NHSE Exemplar of best practice**
- **NEL Access webinars**
- **Multiple visits** from GP practices from across NEL - Sharing best practice
- Now scaled up to offer Access Model across **seven sites** with **four Digital Hubs & one Combined Call Centre** in practices that have historically struggled with access
- Nationally presented **Outreach GP Pop Up Clinics** to circumnavigate access barriers

Patient Voices - The Firs Medical Centre



Local Guide · 11 reviews



★★★★★ a year ago

Myself, my husband and my baby have each received an excellent quality of care from the team over the past few years that we've been patients here. We've always submitted our requests via the online portal and heard back on next steps within just an hour or so (often even quicker for the baby) and are offered the relevant appointment usually that same day too. The clinical team really take their time to understand and explain everything to you when they're diagnosing, and the reception team have always been helpful and efficient. I feel so grateful to receive this quality of care and thought it was important to post my positive feedback to hopefully help others too.

Patient Voices – Francis Road Medical Centre



[5 reviews](#) · [9 photos](#)



★★★★★ a year ago

Recently registered with this GP practice. It was super easy and fast. I have registered with them less than an hour. Other Medical Centres told me it will take more than a week to register and about 2 week for an appointment but I managed to get an appointment in two days after registration. Staff members was polite as well especially guy who works at Reception desk

Patient Voices – Beam Park Medical Practice



1 review



★★★★★ 5 months ago

This is the best GP I ever had. Online booking is very fast and easy to use. Admin staff are very friendly and efficient. I wanted to say big thank you to Doctor Singh for taking great care of me. He is very professional and really cares about his patients. Would highly recommend this new GP practice. Thank you

Lessons learned and looking ahead

Summary

- Access transformation works best when built on the Modern General Practice Access model
- Equity, quality and continuity need protecting alongside access

Next steps

- Continuous improvement and refinement based on data
- Focus on enabling continuity of care
- Push the boundaries on supporting inclusive access for seldom heard groups
- Continue outreach models to address unmet need in the community
- Keep the patient voice at the centre with meaningful co-production



Spreading good practice across North East London

- Using data and patient feedback to understand variation in patient access and patient experience
- Support targeted at those practices with the greatest challenges
- Two Modern General Practice Peer Ambassador GPs are providing support to practices and teams in implementing the Modern General Practice framework
- NEL-wide webinars to share good practice and support practices to implement contractual requirements around access - over 200 people attended the first one.
- 28 practices are participating in a national Quality Improvement Programme to improve access
- Practices are being supported with digital tools to improve access and free up capacity.

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